

Barcelona, Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Areas partners with the Red Cross to welcome Ukrainian refugees at airports, train stations, and motorway travel plazas staffed by volunteers

- **Initiative starts today and consists of Red Cross volunteers providing refugees with food and beverages at Barcelona-Sants train station, the Empordà motorway travel plaza, and Barcelona airport.**
- **Collaboration kicks off in Spain and is expected to be extended to other Spanish cities and different European countries that help refugees via the nonprofit. Areas is already implementing this initiative in France, specifically at the Paris-Gare de l'Est train station.**
- **Red Cross estimates it will need to care for around 250 people off each flight, while the figure could reach 800 people a day at Sants, including volunteers.**

Areas, the global leader company that manages restaurants and convenience stores at airports, train stations, and motorway travel plazas and which operates in 10 countries, has reached a cooperation agreement with the Red Cross to provide food and drink at the refugee welcome points the nonprofit has set up at airports, train stations, and motorways. The company aims to provide food and drink for all the refugees and volunteers involved in the initial hours of reception. The partnership framework is established off the back of the coordination work Areas also does with airport, motorway, and train station managing authorities.

The initiative began today at Sants station in Barcelona, Josep Tarradellas Barcelona El Prat airport, and the Empordà service area, and is expected to soon be extended to Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas airport and other accommodation points in Spain. Outside the country, Areas is already implementing this initiative in France, specifically at the Paris-Gare de l'Est train station, and is endeavoring, via the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), to expand the initiative started in Spain to Germany, Italy and Portugal, too.

"The company has a large responsibility as it is present in Europe's leading communication hubs that attract not only Ukrainian refugees fleeing their country but also volunteers lending their aid.



As restaurant operators at airports, train stations, and services areas we believe we must rise to the present circumstances and provide our aid to all the authorities that manage the arrival of these refugees in our countries,” said Oscar Vela - Areas CEO. “We provide them with food and drink, but we also share the core value of all our partners and employees being ready to offer all their human warmth and tradition of welcoming people who are going through something that is having an enormous impact on their lives,” Oscar Vela added.

Areas will offer the Red Cross the food and drink needed when refugees reach Spain from Ukraine at these reception, referral, and accommodation facilities. In this regard, the humanitarian organization is coordinating the reception of flights at Josep Tarradellas Barcelona El Prat airport with 250 refugees, and expects that major stations such as Barcelona-Sants will see footfall of up to 800 people a day between refugees and volunteers. At points close to the French border, such as the Empordà service area, the figure could be around a hundred people arriving by coach being attended by the NGO.

Through its outlets and with the collaboration of suppliers such as Europastry and García de Pou, Areas has no specific planned end date for the initiative. It will be implemented in line with the development of the armed conflict.

In Spain, Areas and PlanEmpleoCruzRoja Alicante recently worked together providing theoretical and hands-on kitchen training for students who signed up in late March to do work experience in different restaurants at Alicante airport.

The company has also built up meaningful experience in implementing large-scale solidarity actions involving significant logistics. In 2020, during the pandemic-driven lockdown, Areas kept its establishments open to ensure a minimum service at every place where it operated and made itself available to key groups such as truckers and health workers, who it invited to eat for free in its outlets. Also, at times of great climate exceptionality, Areas regularly supports emergency workers and authorities by distributing food and drink to facilitate their services and the return to normality.